

Message Text

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44

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 ERDA-07 NRC-07 ACDA-10 CIAE-00

INR-07 IO-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 OES-05 FEAE-00

DODE-00 H-02 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 CEQ-01

EPA-04 /117 W

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R 250823Z AUG 75

FM AMCONSUL NAHA

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1822

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB

OAC CAMP BUTLER

USAGO MACHINATO

313TH AD KADENA

MARCORB CAMP FOSTER

COMFLEACTS OKINAWA

OAFO CAMP BUTLER

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

UNCLASSIFIED NAHA 432

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: MARR, JA

SUBJECT: OKINAWA POLLUTION FLAP ON ARMY LEAK OF HEXAVALENT
CHROMIUM

SUMMARY: THE OKINAWA PRESS IS HEADLINING AN ALLEGED U.S. ARMY
LEAKAGE OF A CHEMICAL DETERGENT CONTAINING THE TOXIC HEXAVALENT
CHROMIUM, THE SUBJECT OF A MAJOR POLLUTION SCARE ON THE MAIN
ISLANDS. END SUMMARY

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1. THE OKINAWAN PRESS AUG 24-25 HAS GIVEN TOP NEWS AND EDITORIAL
COVERAGE TO ALLEGATIONS THAT A RECENT OUTFLOW OF CHEMICALS FROM
THE U.S. ARMY MACHINATO SERVICE AREA CONTAINED HIGH AMOUNTS
OF HEXAVALENT CHROMIUM, THE TOXIC SUBSTANCE THAT IS NOW THE SUBJECT
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OF A MAJOR POLLUTION SCARE IN JAPAN PROPER. THE OUTFLOW OF THE RED,

SOMEWHAT SMELLY HEAVY DETERGENT USED DURING THE TRUCK REBUILDING PROCESS OCCURRED FROM A RUPTURED TANK DURING THE TYPHOON AUG 11. WHILE THE SUBJECT OF LIMITED PRESS CRITICISM AT THE TIME, THE INCIDENT BECAME SENSATIONAL WITH URASOE MAYOR MATAYOSHI'S REVELATION AUG 23 THAT HIS CITY'S ANALYSIS REVEALED 400 PPM OF HEXA VALENT CHROMIUM, "8,000 TIMES MORE THAN THE SAFETY STANDARD." THE PRESS HAS CHIPPED IN WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF ALLEGATIONS, INCLUDING A CHARGE THAT IT WAS AN INTENTIONAL RELEASE. THE PREFECTURE AND EVERYBODY ELSE ARE REPORTED TO BE READYING COMPLAINTS TO THE ARMY AND DEMANDS FOR "ON-THE-SPOT INVESTIGATIONS." THE MILITARY WORKERS UNION (ZENGUNRO) IS PROTESTING THAT THIS ALSO SHOWS CARELESSNESS WITH THE LIVES OF THE WORKERS DUE TO THE ARMY'S OVER-ECONOMIZING ON MAINTENANCE COSTS.

2. COMMENT; THE ARMY IS HASTENING ITS OWN CHEMICAL ANALYSIS FOR HEXA VALENT CHROMIUM AND WILL BE ISSUING A STATEMENT AS SOON AS

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POSSIBLE. THE CHEMICAL HAS NOT BEEN USED FOR A YEAR AND WAS AWAITING DISPOSAL WHEN THE ACCIDENT OCCURED. IT APPEARS THAT THE INCIDENT WAS BY NO MEANS AS SERIOUS AS THE PRESS WORST-CASE PRESENTATION HAS IT, BUT THE NEWSPAPERS AND THE LEFTISTS WILL CERTAINLY MAKE GOOD USE OF THIS ISSUE AGAINST US.

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